

ALBIO SIRES
13TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
WESTERN HEMISPHERE
EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3013

November 17, 2010

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

re: Renewal of Station License of WWOR-TV
File No. BRCT-20070201AJT and MB Docket No. 07-260

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

More than three years ago, a New Jersey citizen's group (Voice for New Jersey) petitioned the Commission to deny the renewal of WWOR-TV's broadcast license based on the station's ongoing failure to properly fulfill its public interest obligations. While the Commission acted promptly to hold a public hearing on this matter in November, 2007, there has been no subsequent Commission activity and the status of the license renewal remains in limbo.

Over the past two years, it has become evident that WWOR-TV has not displayed that it is working to improve its public affairs programming. To this extent, I urge the Commission to either deny renewal of the station license or to establish clear performance standards which will compel the station to meet its public interest obligations.

As a result of the past inquiries three years ago, I believe the Commission should be adequately familiar to the facts surrounding the station's performance at the time of its application for license renewal. The primary concern at the time was the lack of news and public affairs programming appearing on WWOR. To compare, each of WWOR's peers in the New York market offered from three to seven times more news programming than WWOR's one hour per day. At just one hour per week, the station's public affairs programming was similarly lacking.

Unfortunately, in the years following the 2007 hearing, the station's licensee, Fox Television Stations, Inc., further downgraded public affairs programming. In July, 2009, WWOR reduced

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its weekday news programming to a half-hour per day and moved the weekday news show from prime time to late night. It also eliminated weekend news coverage altogether, and has cut its public affairs programming in half.

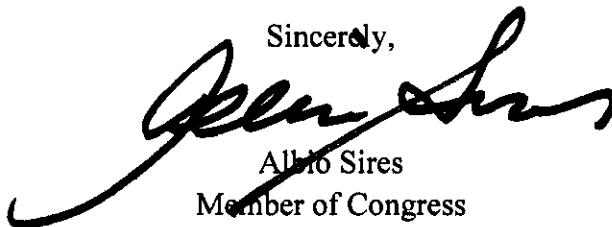
In conjunction with these programming cuts, Fox effectively made WWOR a satellite of its New York network affiliate, WNYW-TV. Based on Fox's own filings with the Commission, WWOR's staffing has been reduced by more than two thirds since the station's 2007 application for license renewal. The station's management is "shared" with WNYW, and its on-air talent appears regularly on WNYW. On a typical business day, WWOR's Secaucus headquarters resembles a ghost town; reportedly only one of the facility's four studios is being utilized, and only three hours of programming is produced each week. A large number of New Jersey jobs have been lost to WWOR's downsizing.

Additionally, in its recent *ex parte* filings with the Commission, Fox portrays misrepresentations regarding the 2009 programming cuts and staffing reductions at WWOR. I will not go into full detail regarding this matter, as recent filings by Voice for New Jersey and others clearly illustrate Fox's distortion of the 2009 incidents.

Furthermore, in recent years, the Commission has granted waivers to Fox and its parent company News Corp of its cross-ownership rules allowing News Corp. entities to simultaneously own WWOR-TV, WNYW-TV, and the *New York Post*. To date, News Corp. has failed to comply with the Commission's requirement that it relinquish ownership of WWOR-TV or the *New York Post* by December 29, 2008, and no further extension of the cross-ownership waiver has been granted. Applications for the renewal of both the WWOR and WNYW broadcast licenses are similarly pending.

In light of the factors I just listed, I urge the Commission to take prompt action so that the people of New Jersey may finally receive the high-quality television programming that they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Albio Sires", written over the typed name.

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

cc: Senator Frank R. Lautenberg
Senator Robert Menendez
Voice for New Jersey



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 14, 2010

The Honorable Albio Sires
U.S. House of Representatives
1024 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Sires:

Thank you for your letter regarding the application to renew the broadcast license of WWOR-TV, Secaucus, New Jersey. I appreciate your taking the time to share with me your perspective about this important proceeding. The Commission's Media Bureau will make your correspondence part of the proceeding record.

The Commission has long recognized the unique circumstances relating to the provision of broadcast television service to residents of New Jersey, with WWOR as the only full-power commercial television station currently licensed to a community within the state. As a result, proceedings to renew the WWOR license have involved evaluating the service provided by the station to all of Northern New Jersey, rather than examining only the service that WWOR offers to its community of license.

In its petition to deny the pending renewal application, the Voice for New Jersey (VNJ) raised questions concerning whether WWOR has met its service obligations to the residents of New Jersey. VNJ also submitted the information that you cite regarding WWOR programming and staff changes. Additional filings have been made in this proceeding as recently as November of this year, discussing concerns about the operations of WWOR.

The Media Bureau is evaluating the record compiled in the WWOR license renewal proceeding carefully, and will prepare recommendations on how to proceed as soon as the evaluation is completed.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski